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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 182803

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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 609 - JULY 19, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. SYRIA. THE SYRIANS APPEAR CONFIDENT THAT ONCE THE EGYPTIANS HAVE EXHAUSTED THEIR NEGOTIATING ALTERNATIVES WITH ISRAEL, THE ARAB WORLD WILL DISPLAY MORE RECEPTIVITY TO THE APPEAL OF DAMASCUS' APPROACH TO A SETTLEMENT. CONSEQUENTLY, THERE SEEMS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF ASSAD AND SADAT RESOLVING THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER THE BEST APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS SO LONG AS THE SADAT INITIATIVE CONTINUES.

2. THERE ARE ALSO DIFFERENCES IN STYLE BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS. SADAT FINDS AN AMBIGUOUS NO-WAR, NO-PEACE STRATEGY ;NACCEPTABLE, BUT WITHOUT A VIABLE WAR OPTION, THERE IS LITTLE HE CAN DO ABOUT IT. FOR ASSAD, HOWEVER, WHO THRIVES ON AMBIGUITY, A PERIOD OF NO-WAR AND NO-PEACE OFFERS SOME ALLURE.

3. THE SYRIANS MAY FULLY EXPECT TO WAIT UNTIL THE 1980 US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FOR SERIOUS COMPREHENSIVE
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NEGOTIATIONS. DURING THE INTERIM, DAMASCUS IS PREPARED TO SEEK PARITY WITH ISRAEL BY RENEWED EFFORTS TO COORDINATE ARAB POLITICAL STRATEGY; A UNIFIED ARAB MILITARY POLICY SUFFICIENTLY CREDIBLE TO POSE A THREAT TO ISRAEL'S NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN BORDERS; AND ENCOURAGING INCREMENTAL CHANGES IN US POLICY THAT WILL BRING POPULAR US SUPPORT BEHIND THE ADMINISTRATION IN SEEKING A JUST SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS.

4. BOGGED DOWN IN LEBANON, THE SYRIANS REALIZE THEY CURRENTLY POSSESS LITTLE CAPABILITY TO INTIMIDATE ISRAEL MILITARILY. THEIR MILITARY PROBLEMS ARE FURTHER EXACERBATED BY THE LIBYANS, WHO HAVE NOT PROVIDED PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON FUNDING FOR SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, WHATEVER HOPES ASSAD MAY HAVE HAD FOR SUPPORT FROM THE "STEADFASTNESS FRONT" HAVE REPORTEDLY DISSIPATED.

5. DAMASCUS BELIEVES THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE ALREADY SUCCESSFULLY DIVERTED SADAT AND THE US FROM FOCUSING ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. WITH THE RESUMPTION OF CLOSE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND THE PLO IN

LEBANON, SYRIAN LEADERS ARE AGAIN EMPHASIZING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS THE CORE OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE, AND CLAIM THAT IT IS BEING GIVEN INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION BY SADAT.

6. ASSURED OF THE BASIC CORRECTNESS OF HIS POSITION, ASSAD NOW APPEARS MERELY TO BE WAITING SADAT OUT. IF SADAT PROFFERS AN OLIVE BRANCH, ASSAD IS LIKELY TO ASSUME THAT SADAT IS READY TO ABANDON HIS INITIATIVE AND RETURN TO GENEVA. (CONFIDENTIAL)

7. EGYPT. EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT THE CENTER PARTY MET OVER THE WEEKEND TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS, THUS FAR, OF THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" ON POLITICAL REFORM. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTY IS APPARENTLY DEVELOPING AN AMORPHOUS PHILOSOPHY OR IDEALOGY WHICH WILL BE FURTHER ARTICULATED DURING THE ARAB SOCIALIST UNION CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JULY 22. WHAT WILL EMERGE IS UNCLEAR, BUT IT SEEMS THAT THE PARTY HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE PUBLIC OPPOSES LEFTISTS, RIGHTISTS, AND THE NEW WAFD WHILE STILL FAVORING A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM. THE LOWEST NUMBER OF PARTIES SUGGESTED IN THE PRESS IS THREE. (CONFIDENTIAL)

8. LEBANON. SMALL STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO REESTABLISH NORMALCY. SOME CIVILIANS WERE RETURNING TO THE AREA. INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WERE DEPLOYING OVER A WIDER AREA INCLUDING THE PORT, AND SOME ARMY UNITS WERE ALSO REPORTED IN THE PORT AREA.

9. EMBASSY BEIRUT REPORTS THAT BASHTR GEMAYEL SAID THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF SARKIS RESIGNATION WOULD NOT AFFECT THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS FACING LEBANON. HE CHARACTERIZED THE REGIME AS "OUTDATED" AND IN NEED OF CHANGE, AND POINTED OUT THAT EXTERNAL "GUARANTEES" WOULD NOT SOLVE LEBANON'S PROBLEMS. HE ALSO REJECTED PARTITION, CALLED FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OCCUPATION FORCES, AND PLEDGED TO DISMANTLE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS, WHEN A STRONG "LEBANESE" STATE EMERGED.

10. WHILE THE SYRIANS HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED NOT TO PRESS THEIR ATTACK ON EAST BEIRUT IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, THIS DECISION IS CAUSING STRAINS WITHIN THE SYRIAN MILITARY. REPORTS THAT THE SYRIAN SOLDIERS ARE FRUSTRATED AND ANGERED BY SNIPER FIRE FROM TEENAGE MILITIAMEN ARE COMMON. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO THE SYRIANS, MORE OF THEIR SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN KILLED BY SNIPER FIRE SINCE THE CEASEFIRE THAN WERE KILLED DURING HOSTILITIES. CONFIDENTIAL

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11. IRAQ. THE CURRENT TENSIONS IN IRAQ'S RELATIONS WITH THE USSR WERE REFLECTED IN SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS BY IRAQI LEADERS MARKING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY THIS WEEK OF THE BAATHIST REGIME. PRESIDENT BAKR AND STRONGMAN SADDAM HUSAYN STRESSED THEIR PURSUIT OF AN INDEPENDENT AND NONALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY AND CALLED FOR NONINTERFERENCE IN IRAQ'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE IRAQI LEADERS GAVE NO HINT OF INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE US.

12. RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND THE USSR DETERIORATED THIS SPRING AS A RESULT OF DIFFERENCES OVER THE HORN OF AFRICA, WHERE IRAQ SUPPORTS THE ERITREAN INSURGENTS FIGHTING THE SOVIET-BACKED ETHIOPIAN REGIME. THE IRAQIS ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE SOVIET ROLE IN THE RECENT COUPS IN AFGHANISTAN AND SOUTH YEMEN. THE SOVIETS ARE UPSET BY IRAQ'S EXECUTION OF AT LEAST 21 IRAQI COMMUNISTS IN THE ARMED FORCES FOR ALLEGEDLY CONSPIRING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT.

13. IN A NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW PUBLISHED THIS WEEK, SADDAM HUSAYN DECLARED THAT THE SOVIETS "WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL THE WHOLE WORLD BECOMES COMMUNIST," A WARNING HE HAD MADE SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS. THE TWO LEADERS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT IRAQ HAS NO INTENTION OF DISRUPTING RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, THEIR CHIEF MILITARY SUPPLIER.

14. A SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGED PRIVATELY LAST FRIDAY THAT RELATIONS WITH IRAQ ARE "DELICATE," AND SOVIET PRESS COMMENTARY ON IRAQ'S NATIONAL DAY REITERATED SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT BAATHIST TREATMENT OF THE IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY.

15. PRAVDA'S REFERENCE ON FRIDAY TO THE "DIFFICULTIES"
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IN IRAQ'S BAATH-COMMUNIST NATIONAL FRONT SUGGESTS THAT MOSCOW EXPECTS CONTINUED IRAQI EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN BAGHDAD. SOVIET BROADCASTS LAST WEEK CAUTIONED BAGHDAD AGAINST "COMPLICATING" RELATIONS BETWEEN THE BAATHISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS AND SUGGESTED THAT FURTHER BAATHIST REPRESSION COULD PROMPT THE COMMUNISTS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE FRONT.

16. THE IRAQI STATEMENTS SUGGEST IRAQ HAS NO INTEREST NOW IN IMPROVING RE'ATIONS WITH THE US. SADDAM HUSAYN ACKNOWLEDGED IN HIS NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW THAT IRAQ HAS NOTED WITH INTEREST PRESIDENT CARTER'S MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY STATEMENTS, BUT THAT IRAQ "IS STILL WAITING FOR DEEDS AND THAT CAN ONLY MEAN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES."

17. OTHER REMARKS BY BAKR AND SADDAM HUSAYN REAFFIRMED THE THRUST OF IRAQ'S MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY. THEY REITERATED THEIR BASIC OPPOSITION TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL--AND ACCUSED EGYPT AND SYRIA OF FO LOWING "CAPITU-LATIONIST POLICIES." THEY ALSO DENOUNCED THOSE STATES TRYING TO KEEP IRAQ TSO'ATED, PRESUMABLY A REFERENCE TO SYRIAN ATTEMPTS TO BLOCK RECENT IRAQI MOVES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES. THE IRAQI LEADERS ALSO CHARGED SYRIA WITH ENCOURAGING SECTARIAN WARFARE IN LEBANON. (CONFIDENTIAL) CHRISTOPHER

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